

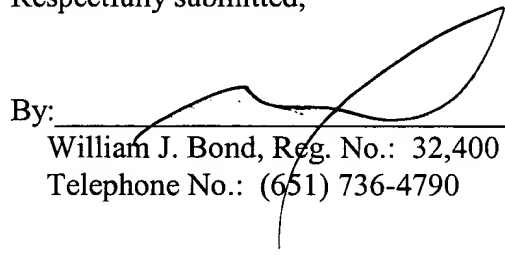
REMARKS

Reexamination and reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-8 have been cancelled removing the rejections thereover. With respect to claims 9-16, it is respectfully pointed out that the present application relate back to a PCT filing, US98/25736 having a filing date of December 4, 1998 claiming further priority to Japanese Patent Applications filed on December 5, 1997. As such, the rejections based on Applicants' later filed U.S. Patent No. 6,533,119 filed May 8, 2000 and the European Patent No. 1066826, published on January 10, 2001 are inappropriate and respectfully requested withdrawn.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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